

Message Text

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TAGS: ELAB ET

SUBJECT: REGISTRATION OF NEW LABOR UNIONS SAID TO BE PROGRESSING AT
SATISFACTORY PACE

1. ETHIOPIAN HERALD OF MARCH 12 QUOTES HEAD OF LABOR DEPT IN
MINISTRY OF LABOR YEMANI ARAYA AS SAYING THAT 634 UNIONS WITH A
TOTAL OF 151,610 WORKERS HAVE REGISTERED WITH THE NEWLY PROCLAIMED
ALL ETHIOPIAN TRADE UNION (AETU). YEMANI IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT
PRIOR TO NEW LABOR PROCLAMATION THERE WERE 388 UNIONS WITH AN
OVER-ALL MEMBERSHIP OF 117,000 WORKERS.

2. SINCE DECEMBER 10, 1975, LABOR PROCLAMATION WAS FOLLOWED BY
ONE MONTH PERIOD DURING WHICH PROCLAMATION WAS EXPLAINED TO
WORKERS, YEMANI STATED, ONLY TWO MONTH REGISTRATION PERIOD HAD
ACTUALLY BEEN ALLOWED. YEMANI ADMITTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN
"A PRONOUNCED RELUCTANCE" ON THE PART OF BIGGER UNIONS
TO REGISTER WITH AETU BECAUSE CERTAIN OF THEIR DEMANDS FORWARDED
TO THE GOVT HAD NOT BEEN COMPLIED WITH. YEMANI WENT ON TO
EXPLAIN THAT THIS PROBLEM HAS SINCE BEEN RESOLVED AND EXCEPT
FOR A COUPLE OF UNIONS, NAMELY THOSE OF BANKS AND INSURANCE
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COMPANIES, THE OTHER LARGE UNIONS ARE IN THE PROCESS OF COMPLYING

WITH THE NEW LABOR PROCLAMATION. QUESTIONED AS TO THE REASONS FOR BANKING AND INSURANCE COMPANY UNIONS' RELUCTANCE, YEMANI PLEADED IGNORANCE BUT STATED HE BELIEVED IT HAD TO DO WITH THE REORGANIZATION AND CONSOLIDATION MEASURES TAKEN IN THE BANKING INDUSTRY. YEMANI URGED THOSE UNIONS WHO HAVE NOT COMPLIED WITH THE NEW REGULATION TO DO SO UNDER PAIN OF DEPRIVATION OF THEIR LEGAL STATUS. IF DEPRIVED OF LEGAL STATUS, HE SAID, THE UNIONS CANNOT SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THEIR MEMBERS NOR ENTER INTO COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS. AGREEMENTS NEGOTIATED BY THESE DEFAULTING UNIONS WILL BE ALLOWED TO RUN THEIR COURSE BUT NO NEW ONES WILL BE NEGOTIATED.

3. YEMANI DISCLOSED THAT SPECIAL COURTS IN 32 CENTERS AROUND THE COUNTRY HAVE BEEN SET UP TO HANDLE LABOR CASES EXCLUSIVELY.

4. COMMENT: WE ARE SKEPTICAL OF YEMANI'S FIGURES FOR NEWLY EN-ROLLED UNIONS AND WORKERS. ALTHOUGH NE LABOR LAWS HAVE LOWERED MINIMUM REQUIREMENT FOR FORMING UNION FROM 50 TO 20 WORKERS, WE SUSPECT THAT FIGURE OF 151,000 MAY REPRESENT LABORERS THAT GOVT IS ATTEMPTING TO ORGANIZE INTO UNIONS OR ALTERNATIVELY, POTENTIAL LABOR UNION MEMBERSHIP IF ALL WORKERS ELIGIBLE TO FORM UNIONS DO SO. ALTHOUGH RECENT RELEASE OF DETAINED FORMER CELU LEADERS MAY HAVE HAD EFFECT ON AETU ORGANIZING EFFORTS, OUR MOST RECENT INFORMATION IS THAT THE OLD LABOR UNIONS, SUCH S EAL, CONTINUE TO DISPLAY "A PRONOUNCED RELUCTANCE" TO JOIN AETU. WE WILL CONTINUE CHECKING OUR LABOR SOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS. YEMANI'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON 32 SEPCIAL COURTS TO HANDLE LABOR CASES IS THE FIRST WE HAVE HEARD OF SUCH JURIDICAL INSTANCES.

HUMMEL

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEE.

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